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Sahitya Akademi



India International Centre

invite you to

**meet the author**

**Ajeet Cour**



**A**jete Cour, fictionist, journalist and economist was born in Lahore. She did her Masters in Economics from Delhi and took up journalism as a career. She has been editing *Rupee Trade* (now renamed *Indo Russian Trade*) for the last 31 years besides freelancing for various newspapers and journals. Ever since she started writing Punjabi fiction more than four decades ago, she has with every successive collection elevated her reputation as a writer of great charm, serious intent and innovative talent.

Ajete Cour's first short story was published when she was sixteen. Her early stories revealed a feminist stance. Right from the beginning she was cautious not to let any sentimentality—which has been the bane of many a woman writer—trivialise her fiction.

She has so far published nine short story col-

lections, six novelettes, her autobiography, a collection of personality sketches of creative people, and a travelogue, besides her translations of popular English, American and Indian classics.

Even Ajete Cour's early stories brought into focus the unequal status of woman in our patriarchal society. Perhaps for the first time in Punjabi fiction she talked boldly of the physical side of man-woman relationships for which she was vehemently criticised at that point of time. Later, her awareness ripened around the more complex problems of life and she became conscious of atrocities at various levels and of national and international political and socio-economic situations. Her writings now reflected this novel awareness of the human condition. Perhaps the most deeply emotional pieces of her writing are to be found in her autobiography



With her daughter Arpana



Receiving Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award

*Khanabadosh*. For her, a story is a painting of the stark realities of life. Fringes and frills in a short story, she feels are a superfluity she carefully avoids. This makes her very different from her contemporary women writers. In the starkness of her narrative, she feels herself closer to writers like Sadat Hasan Manto, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Ismat Chughtai and Kulwant Singh Virk.

Ajeet Cour as a writer and a person is shockingly bold. Her voice rings clear and loud because she has been standing up against injustice and discrimination in every sphere of life, be it personal, social, professional or political. Her tales portray life in the raw, in all its naked beauty and ugliness.

Her stories and novellettes are included in the syllabi in graduate and post-graduate courses and 28 doctoral and M. Phil

studies have also been done on her writings. Many of her stories have been serialised on Doordarshan and made into telefilms. Her stories have also been translated into various Indian and foreign languages and are regularly broadcast over radio.

Her autobiography *Khanabadosh* is a fascinating collection of reminiscences of the momentous events in her life which had considerable, even decisive significance and influence in moulding her personality and destiny. However today her only motivation and inspiration to write is her daughter Arpana Kaur, who is also a well-known painter.

An outstanding translator, Ajeet Cour has translated and transcreated some of the world's great literary works into Punjabi including those of Emerson, Henry James, Hawthorne, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas,

Khushwant Singh, Ramakanta Rath and Sitakant Mahapatra beside some important Bulgarian poets.

Ajeet Cour edited the first ever *Directory of Indian Women Today*, which continues to be an authentic reference book even after 20 years of its publication.

During the last 15 years or so she has emerged as a painstaking and perceptive journalist with a rare courage of conviction and unique power of communication. Besides incisive articles on the state of the nation today, on violence and communalism, on the present political and socio-economic scenario, she has also done reports and features on significant cultural events like film festivals with immaculate taste.

Ajeet Cour has received several honours and awards including the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1985 for her autobiography *Khanabadosh*.

She is the chairperson of the Academy of Fine Arts and Literature, a unique institution based on a dream, into which she has motivated and initiated a group of intellectuals, artists, musicians, journalists, writers and academicians. For the last 22 years she, along with a few like-minded people has been enriching the cultural scene of Delhi by encouraging talented writers, musicians painters and other artistes. Jagjit Singh, Chitra Singh, Nooran and Gurdas Maan were introduced to the Delhi audience through their efforts. This cultural centre, operative at the Siri Fort Institutional Area, built by her brick by brick, also gives vocational training to uneducated poor women from the neighbouring villages and slums. She is also a member of the General Council of the Sahitya Akademi and of the Governing Council of the Punjabi Academy, Delhi.



During the award function when she received the Sahitya Akademi Award

Currently she is giving finishing touches to the second part of her autobiography *Koora Kabaara*

which has been appearing as a monthly serial in *Aarsi* since July 1974.

### A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### Short Story

- Gulbano*, Aarsi Publishers, 1960  
*Mehak Di Maut*, Navyug Publishers, 1966  
*Butt Shikan*, Lok Sahit Prakashan, 1966  
*Faltu Aurat*, Navyug Publishers, 1972  
*Saviyan Chirian*, Navyug Publishers, 1981  
*Maut Ali Babe Dee*, Navyug Publishers, 1985  
*Na Maaro*, Navyug Publishers, 1990  
*Apne Apne Jangal*, Navyug Publishers, 1994  
*November Churasi*, Navyug Publishers, 1995

#### Novelettes

- Dhup Wala Shahar* (Anthology of three novelettes), Navyug Publishers, 1968  
*Post Mortem*, Aarsi Publishers, 1973  
*Gauri*, Navyug Publishers, 1991

#### Autobiography

- Khanabadosh*, Navyug Publishers, 1982

#### Life Sketches

- Takiye Da Peer* (Collection of Sketches of creative people), Navyug Publishers, 1987

#### Travelogue

- Kache Rangan Da Shehar*: London, Lahore

#### Translated into Punjabi

- Emersons' Literary Essays  
*Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James  
*Return of the Red Rose*, K.A. Abbas  
*The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne  
*The Sikhs* (transcreation) Khushwant Singh  
*Chirayee Ree Too Kiya Jaane*, Sitakant Mahapatra  
*Laltain* (under print) Ramakanta Rath



At the Hemis Monastery, Ladakh

## A CHRONOLOGY

1934	Birth	Swedish Writers' Union
1949	First short story published	1984 International IATA Award
1952	M.A. in Economics	1985 Sahitya Akademi Award for <i>Khanabadosh</i>
1960	First short story collection <i>Gulbano</i> published	1986 Bawa Balwant Award
1962	Honoured by the Punjab Govt. for <i>Gulbano</i> Shiromani Sahitkar of the Year	1987 Participated in International Women's Congress, Moscow
1964	Started editing <i>Rupee Trade</i>	1989 Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award
1975-77	Edited the first <i>Directory of Indian Women</i> (commissioned by the Govt. of India)	1990 Dhaliwal Award Visited China as part of a Cultural Delegation
1979	Honoured by the Punjabi Arts Council	Member of the General Council of the Sahitya Akademi
1983	Honoured by the Punjabi Academy	
1984	Visited Stockholm at the invitation of	1993 Visited Hungary

